



## UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

FLEET MARINE FORCE, ATLANTIC  
MARINE FORCES COMMAND  
MARINE FORCES NORTHERN COMMAND  
1775 FORRESTAL DRIVE  
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA 23551-2400

5720

DON-USMC-2023-015763

5 September 2023

Ms. Michelle Smith  
Associated Press  
Alabama, 13455

Dear Ms. Smith:

SUBJ: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST CASE FILE NUMBER  
DON-USMC-2023-015763

Enclosure: (1) FOIA Request DON-USMC-2022-008618  
(2) Response letter to FOIA Request DON-USMC-2022-008618  
(3) Email records from FOIA Request DON-USMC-2022-008618 response  
(4) Emails related to FOIA Request DON-USMC-2022-008618

1. This letter is written in final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request in which you seek "...all records produced for FOIA number DON-USMC-2022-008618, including the request itself and any correspondence about the FOIA."

2. A search of Marine Force Command records returned four documents consisting of 14 pages responsive to your request. The enclosed records have been reviewed under the applicable portions of the FOIA statute (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5720.42G. A review of these documents indicates a requirement to delete certain information under FOIA exemption 5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(6). A further breakdown of this exemption is indicated in the copy of the document provided to you as follows:

- 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6): Information consisting of the names, ranks, social security numbers, medical information and personal identifiers of military and civilian personnel who are assigned to readily deployable or sensitive units, the disclosure of which would result in a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

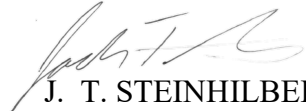
3. In view of the above, you may consider this to be an adverse determination that may be appealed. You may submit an appeal to the Judge Advocate General (Code 14), 1322 Patterson Avenue SE, Suite 3000, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5066. Your appeal, if any, must be postmarked within 90 calendar days from the date of this letter and should include a copy of your initial request, a copy of this letter, and a statement indicating why you believe your appeal should be granted. I recommend that your appeal and its envelope both bear the notation, "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

5 September 2023

4. You also have the right to seek assistance and/or dispute resolution services from the Marine Corps FOIA Public Liaison, Ms. Sally Hughes, at [hqmcfoia@usmc.mil](mailto:hqmcfoia@usmc.mil) or (703) 614-4008, and/or the Department of the Navy FOIA Public Liaison, Mr. Christopher Julka, at [Christopher.a.julka@navy.mil](mailto:Christopher.a.julka@navy.mil) or (703) 697-0031.

5. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call Mr. Joshua Steinhilber at the Marine Forces Command, Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act office at (757) 836-2025 between the hours of 0800 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Sincerely,

  
J. T. STEINHILBER  
FOIA/PA Officer

# DON-USMC-2022-008618 Task Details

Task Due Date: 05/23/2022

Case Phase: Closed Case Status: Closed Task Status: Closed

## Requester Information

<b>Requester</b>	Ms. Katherine Anthony
<b>Organization</b>	American Oversight
<b>Requester Has Account</b>	No
<b>Email Address</b>	foia@americanoversight.org
<b>Phone Number</b>	202-897-3918
<b>Fax Number</b>	
<b>Address</b>	1030 15th Street NW Suite B255
<b>City</b>	Washington
<b>State/Province</b>	DC
<b>Zip Code/Postal Code</b>	20005
<b>Tracking Number</b>	DON-USMC-2022-008618
<b>Submitted Date</b>	05/23/2022
<b>Received Date</b>	05/23/2022
<b>Perfected Date</b>	11/09/2022
<b>Last Assigned Date</b>	11/09/2022
<b>Assigned To</b>	Mr. Joshua Steinhilber (Marine Corps Forces Command)
<b>Last Assigned By</b>	Mr. Joshua Steinhilber (Marine Corps Forces Command)
<b>Request Track</b>	Simple
<b>Fee Limit</b>	\$0.01

## Closure Information

<b>Closed Date</b>	11/14/2022
<b>Disposition</b>	Partial Grant/Partial Denial
<b>"Other" Disposition</b>	
<b>Exemptions Used</b>	Ex. 6
<b>Statutes Used</b>	
<b>Subtypes Used</b>	

## Task Details

<b>Task Type</b>	Fee Waiver
<b>Task Submitted Date</b>	05/23/2022
<b>Task Due Date</b>	05/23/2022
<b>Task Closed Date</b>	11/14/2022
<b>Assigned To</b>	Mr. Joshua Steinhilber (Marine Corps Forces Command)
<b>Last Assigned Date</b>	11/14/2022
<b>Last Assigned By</b>	Warren Sumpter (Department of the Navy)

## Requester Justification

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, American Oversight requests a waiver of fees associated with processing this request for records. The subject of this request concerns the operations of the federal government, and the disclosures will likely contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by the general public in a significant way. Moreover, the request is primarily and fundamentally for non-commercial purposes. American Oversight requests a waiver of fees because disclosure of the requested information is "in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of operations or activities of the government."<sup>4</sup> The public has a significant interest in the Department of Defense's handling of extremism among military personnel.<sup>5</sup> Records with the potential to shed light on this matter would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the federal government, including whether and to what extent military personnel received comprehensive instruction regarding prohibited extremist activities during the shutdown ordered by the Department of Defense in February 2021. American Oversight is committed to transparency and makes the responses agencies provide to FOIA requests publicly available, and the public's understanding of the government's activities would be enhanced through American Oversight's analysis and publication of these records. This request is primarily and fundamentally for non-commercial purposes.<sup>6</sup> As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, American Oversight does not have a commercial purpose and the release of the information requested is not in American Oversight's financial interest. American Oversight's mission is to promote transparency in government, to educate the public about government activities, and to ensure the accountability of government officials. American Oversight uses the information gathered, and its analysis of it, to educate the public through reports, press releases, or other media. American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public website and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.<sup>7</sup> American Oversight has also demonstrated its commitment to the public disclosure of documents and creation of editorial content through regular substantive analyses posted to its website.<sup>8</sup> Examples reflecting this commitment to the public disclosure of documents and the creation of editorial content include the posting of records related to the Trump Administration's contacts with Ukraine and analyses of those contacts;<sup>9</sup> posting records and editorial content about the federal government's response to the Coronavirus pandemic;<sup>10</sup> posting records received as part of American Oversight's "Audit the Wall" project to gather and analyze information related to the administration's proposed construction of a barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border, and analyses of what those records reveal;<sup>11</sup> the posting of records related to an ethics waiver received by a senior Department of Justice attorney and an analysis of what those records demonstrated regarding the Department's process for issuing such waivers;<sup>12</sup> and posting records and analysis of federal officials' use of taxpayer dollars to charter private aircraft or use government planes for unofficial business.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, American Oversight qualifies for a fee waiver.

## Request Handling

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<b>Requester Info Available to the Public</b>	No
<b>Request Track</b>	Simple
<b>Fee Category</b>	Media
<b>Fee Waiver Requested</b>	Yes
<b>Fee Waiver Status</b>	Not Billable
<b>Expedited Processing Requested</b>	No
<b>Expedited Processing Status</b>	
<b>Request Perfected</b>	Yes
<b>Perfected Date</b>	11/09/2022
<b>Acknowledgement Sent Date</b>	
<b>Unusual Circumstances</b>	No
<b>5 Day Notifications</b>	No
<b>Litigation</b>	No

## Description

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**Description** 1 - All records reflecting the content of, created in connection with or in preparation for, or distributed before, during, or after any presentation (whether live or pre-recorded) or discussion conducted by your US Armed Forces service branch and any of your service branch components, commanding officers, or supervisors in connections with the Department of Defense-ordered Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the ranks, including to but not limited to: A: Speech or discussion transcripts; written materials memorializing, summarizing, or describing of the presentation or discussion; unpublished video or audio recordings of the presentation or discussion; or presentation slides. B. Talking points; prepared remarks; factual reports; discussion questions; or other preparatory materials. C. Handouts; case studies; or unpublished video or a audio recordings, such as training videos, presented directly to military personnel. -To the extent any recordings are responsive to this request, American Oversight seeks only unpublished recordings. For example, the video titled " Extremism Stand Down Training Video" posted to the Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School's YouTube account would not be responsive to this request and should not be produced. 2 - A complete copy (including any attachments) of any contracts or subcontract, amendment, memorandum of understanding or other written agreement with any party commissioned to (a) create any material for use during the Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks, or (b) conduct any presentation, discussion, training, or other programming, held in connection with the Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks. For both items of this request, please provide all responsive records from February 1, 2021, through June 1, 2021.

### Short Description

<b>Description Available to the Public</b>	No
<b>Has Description Been Modified</b>	No

## Additional Information

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<b>Case Number</b>	N/A
<b>Name of Local Command</b>	N/A
<b>Contract Number</b>	N/A

**Limit Request To Clearly  
Releasable Info** N/A

## Attached Supporting Files

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<b>Attachments Available to the Public</b>		No
Attached File Name	Size (MB)	File Type
American Oversight request.pdf	0.3196	Adobe PDF Document



## UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

FLEET MARINE FORCE, ATLANTIC  
MARINE FORCES COMMAND  
MARINE FORCES NORTHERN COMMAND  
1775 FORRESTAL DRIVE  
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA 23551-2400

5720

DON-USMC-2022-008618  
9 Nov 22

Ms. Katherine Anthony  
American Oversight  
1030 15th Street NW Suite B255  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Anthony:

SUBJ: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST CASE FILE NUMBER  
DON-USMC-2022-008618

Enclosure: (1) Email records

1. This letter is written in final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request in which you seek "records reflecting the content of, created in connection with or in preparation for, or distributed before, during, or after any presentation or discussion conducted by your US Armed Forces service branch and any of your service branch components, commanding officers, or supervisors in connections with the Department of Defense-ordered Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the ranks."

2. A search of Marine Force Command records returned one document consisting of 4 pages of emails responsive to your request. No speech or discussion transcripts, written materials, summarizations of the presentation or discussion, beyond the included emails, video or audio recordings of the presentation or discussion, or presentation slides were found as records. The enclosed email has been reviewed under the applicable portions of the FOIA statute (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5720.42G. A review of the document indicates a requirement to delete certain information under FOIA exemptions 5 U.S.C. 552 (b)(6). A further breakdown of this exemption is indicated in the copy of the document provided to you as follows:


- 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6): Information consisting of the names, ranks, social security numbers, medical information and personal identifiers of military and civilian personnel who are assigned to readily deployable or sensitive units, the disclosure of which would result in a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

3. In view of the above, you may consider this to be an adverse determination that may be appealed. You may submit an appeal to the Judge Advocate General (Code 14), 1322 Patterson Avenue SE, Suite 3000, Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5066. Your appeal, if any, must be postmarked within 90 calendar days from the date of this letter and should include a copy of your initial request, a copy of this letter, and a statement indicating why you believe your appeal should be granted. I recommend that your appeal and its envelope both bear the notation, "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

(Enclosure 2)

4. You also have the right to seek assistance and/or dispute resolution services from the Marine Corps FOIA Public Liaison, Ms. Sally Hughes, at [hqmcfoia@usmc.mil](mailto:hqmcfoia@usmc.mil) or (703) 614-4008, and/or the Department of the Navy FOIA Public Liaison, Mr. Christopher Julka, at [Christopher.a.julka@navy.mil](mailto:Christopher.a.julka@navy.mil) or (703) 697-0031.
5. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call Mr. Joshua Steinhilber at the Marine Forces Command, Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act office at (757) 836-2025 between the hours of 0800 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Sincerely,



J. T. STEINHILBER  
FOIA/PA Officer

(b) (6)

**From:** (b) (6)  
**Sent:** (b) (6)  
**To:** (b) (6)  
**Subject:** FW: Request quick review - notes on Extremism STAND DOWN

v/r,

-----Original Message-----

**From:** (b) (6)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 31, 2021 7:24 PM  
**To:** (b) (6)  
**Cc:** (b) (6)  
**Subject:** Request quick review - notes on Extremism STAND DOWN

DRAFT+++++

(b) (6)

G3 sections completed STANDDOWN on Extremism ALL HANDS training, small group sessions and submitted training completion roster. As we have one new join since completing this training, (b) (6) will work with HQSVCBN to determine when make-up sessions will occur for new join, leave, TAD personnel.

BLUF: Extremism is often in the eye of the beholder. As such Marines, Sailors, Civilians and their leaders should focus on appropriate behavior IAW laws, regulations and guidance to favorably represent the Marine Corps, DoN and DoD plus continue efforts to always return our Marines and Sailors to the general population as good citizens and leaders. The profession of arms requires each member have full trust and confidence in those on their flanks. Divisiveness that can erode that trust and confidence or which can be exploited by our adversaries to their advantage is unacceptable. Social media can be a great enabler when properly used but can also contribute to divisiveness, particularly in the isolation associated with the COVID environment. Marines, Sailors and Civilians should not let a few tarnish the reputation of the many who preceded us, are serving now or discourage those who will serve.

Some section small group highlights:

(b) (6)

-Focus initially was on representing the Corps, yourself and our families appropriately either as a member of the DoD. We are held to a higher standard and need to act accordingly.

-Maintaining an understanding that no one needs to know your opinion on anything, yet alone things that are not common across the service. There isn't any room in the USMC or DoD for any 'ism (except patriotism which can also be radicalized) so if any of us have any thoughts or ideas that tend to go towards a boundary, the chat at the watering cooler in a work setting is not the same as belying up to the bar with your buddies. Talking race, sexual preference, gender, politics and other sensitive issues either in a work or social media setting are highly not recommended and generally only cause the individual trouble in the end. Same goes for events that could be deemed as extremist organizations or mantras as laid out in the briefings provided.

-One of the largest concern WRT this topic was social media involvement. Discussed digital footprints, trolls, etc. and how likes and comments electronically can be as detrimental to physical interaction WRT this subject matter.

-Takeaways overall were minor but one of the things repeatedly at the onset of the discussion was how the genesis of all this seemed very political in nature and that a few bad apples have dabbled in this arena in terms of outwardly projecting extremist sentiments or actions for as long as anyone could remember. Everyone is aware of the ramifications of their actions and understands how they should carry themselves. Based off directives, training received, etc. there wasn't any issue in terms of following DoD policy or directives.

(b) (6)

-Reviewed the open sentences of the constitution, strong wording that should always bring us together.

-Why the training now, when there have been multiple other events in the past years that would warrant the training (seems politically driven)?

-Not provoked, group also brought up isolation and individuals "being fed" only what's in SM feeds; lack of human-to-human contact will continue to take cultural tolls.

-We need to talk more about commonality across the team (both inside the USMC and as Americans); we only talk about differences, even when trying to promote equality we talk about (and highlight) differences, we never talk about the commonality among us and the importance of common truths.

-It's ok to have different opinions, we need to be comfortable talking about differences of opinion but end on a common value we can all uphold.

(b) (6)

-Clearly define / provide DoD definition of extremism - much discussion during the Town Hall and associated questions on what was and was not considered extremism. Establish / communicate clear guidelines - focus on what to do.

-Stay on top of small things that set the military apart from other organizations - should be 100% accountability on a daily basis. Get out of fire and forget guidance via e-mail and communicate with troops the importance of accountability by demonstrating.

-Social media - provide healthy alternative means to connect in times of isolation. COVID is not helping, when we are all encouraged to isolate. People are spending more time on social media due to COVID (statista.com statistics), where narrative can be easily steered.

-Inter-personal communications - get off email, get away from teams to communicate in the same building and get back to speaking with our personnel. COVID has forced us to rely heavily on technology - as / if we come out, we should revert to the method of actually talking to our personnel, give them a feeling of belonging vs. detached communication - will likely help decrease suicide rates as well.

Happy to discuss any of above observations.

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Director, Operations

Fleet Marine Forces Atlantic

US Marine Corps Forces Command

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

(6)



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-----Original Message-----

From: Steinhilber CIV Joshua T <joshua.steinhilber@usmc.mil>

Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 12:09 PM

To: (b) (6) (b) (6)  
Cc: (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6)  
(b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6)  
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<ontherecord@usmc.mil>; OMB\_On The Record

Subject: RE: FOIA request being redirected to HQMC

Good morning (b) (6)

After talking with my command's COMMSTRAT, they reached out to Communication Directorate (CD), HQMC and received the response below. As far as the FOIA request, the only responsive records we would have, would be the slide deck that was sent to us by HQMC. CD is asserting release authority over the response to extremism for the service. Before I furnish any records, I want to make sure that, (1), they are not duplicates of what your office has already released, as MARFORCOM did not create the slides, higher headquarters sent them to us; (2) we are not overstepping and getting into HQMC CD's lane. I believe that I have copied all of the involved parties, and again, the response from HQMC CD is below. Please let me know how you believe that I should proceed. Thank you.

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6)  
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 11:07 AM  
To: (b) (6) (b) (6) OMB\_HQMC\_CD - OPS <CDOPS@usmc.mil>; OMB\_On The Record <ontherecord@usmc.mil>  
Cc: (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6) (b) (6)  
(b) (6) Steinhilber CIV Joshua T <joshua.steinhilber@usmc.mil>; (b) (6)  
Subject: RE: FOIA request being redirected to HQMC

(b) (6)

CD holds release authority for the service's response to extremism. Please forward any queries to ontherecord.

Very Respectfully,

(b) (6)

Media Officer  
Communication Directorate (CD), HQMC  
3000 Marine Corps Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350 (4B548)  
Office: (703) 614-0215

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6) (b) (6)

Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 10:51 AM

(Enclosure 4)

To: OMB HQMC CD - OPS <CDOPS@usmc.mil>; OMB On The Record <ontherecord@usmc.mil>  
Cc: (b) (6); (b) (6); (b) (6); (b) (6); (b) (6)  
(b) (6); Steinhilber CIV Joshua T <joshua.steinhilber@usmc.mil>  
Subject: FW: FOIA request being redirected to HQMC

Good morning, CD,

Below provided for your guidance related to a FOIA request received by our MFC Adjutant's office (b) (6). Steinhilber (our FOIA officer) will provide related records from the subject extremism training stand down, but the training was provided via TEAMS using slides from HQMC. MFC COMMSTRAT does not have any of the other records requested nor are we spokespeople/release authority for any DoD or service-directed training requirements. Can someone reply all to let us know who to refer any follow-on questions that may come from this media outlet?

Respectfully,

(b) (6)  
Deputy Director, COMMSTRAT & Ops  
Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic  
Marine Forces Command  
Marine Forces Northern Command

V/R,  
Mr. Joshua Steinhilber  
Management and Program Analyst  
FOIA / Privacy Act Officer  
G-1, Force Adjutant Branch  
Marine Forces Command (MARFORCOM)  
: 757-836-2025 (COMM)  
: 836-2025 (DSN)  
:joshua.steinhilber@usmc.mil  
(available via teams)

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6); (b) (6)  
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 9:09 AM  
To: (b) (6); (b) (6); Steinhilber CIV Joshua T <joshua.steinhilber@usmc.mil>  
Cc: SMB MFC ADJUTANT <smb\_mfc\_adjutant@usmc.onmicrosoft.com>; (b) (6)  
(b) (6); (b) (6); (b) (6); (b) (6)  
(b) (6)  
Subject: RE: FOIA request being redirected to HQMC

MARFORCOM -- we're returning this to you for direct response to the requester. This request went to a number of commands, MARFORCOM being just one of them. (b) (6) cc'd above, can provide more info about that, if needed.

(b) (6)  
FOIA/PA Programs Manager  
United States Marine Corps  
3000 Marine Corps Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20350-3000  
Tel: 703-614-3685  
Fax: 703-614-6287

Confidentiality Notice: This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain information that is confidential and/or privileged (attorney work product/attorney-client). Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution may result in civil and/or criminal penalties. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy any copies of the original message.

(Enclosure 4)

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6)  
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 7:39 AM  
To: Steinhilber CIV Joshua T <joshua.steinhilber@usmc.mil>  
Cc: SMB MFC ADJUTANT <smb\_mfc\_adjutant@usmc.onmicrosoft.com>; (b) (6)  
(b) (6); (b) (6); (b) (6)  
Subject: RE: FOIA request being redirected to HQMC

Good Morning Sir,

Is this email referring to case number 2022-008618? If so, do you know why it has been sitting there since May and just assigned to you this week?

-----Original Message-----

From: Steinhilber CIV Joshua T <joshua.steinhilber@usmc.mil>  
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2022 11:13 AM  
To: (b) (6)  
Cc: SMB MFC ADJUTANT <smb\_mfc\_adjutant@usmc.onmicrosoft.com>  
Subject: FOIA request being redirected to HQMC

Good morning Sir.

This is an older request, but it was just assigned to me this morning. I believe that it was meant for Head Quarter Marine Corps or DoD. I intend to reassign it to you unless you feel it is better suited for another component for action. Please let me know if you would like it sent to you or someone else. Thank you.

Very Respectfully,

Mr. Joshua Steinhilber  
Management and Program Analyst  
FOIA / Privacy Act Officer  
G-1, Force Adjutant Branch  
Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic (FMFLANT)  
Marine Forces Command (MARFORCOM)  
Marine Forces Northern Command (MARFORNORTH)  
Bldg NH-33, Room #336  
1775 Forrestal Drive  
Norfolk, VA 23551  
: 757-836-2025 (COMM)  
: 836-2025 (DSN)  
:joshua.steinhilber@usmc.mil  
(available via teams)